

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 4-3

WASHINGTON STAR  
10 JUNE 1978

# Senate Report Doubts Cuban-Katangese Link

By Vernon A. Guldry Jr.

Washington Star Staff Writer

A preliminary report to the Senate Intelligence Committee says there is no "hard, concrete evidence" of Cuban involvement in the invasion of Zaire's Shaba province by Katangese rebels, according to persons familiar with the issue.

The classified report is the latest development in the question of Cuban involvement, which has become an issue of some controversy. Much of that controversy has centered on the weight that should be given to administration conclusions of Cuban involvement based on its intelligence regarding the Katangese.

President Carter has said the Cubans trained and equipped the invaders. The Cuban government has denied any involvement, direct or indirect.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee yesterday received one of a number of briefings given by CIA Director Stansfield Turner on the issue.

Members of the panel emerged from the briefing with mixed reactions. Chairman John Sparkman, D-Ala., said the evidence "is circumstantial and its weight is substantial but by no means conclusive."

SEN. DICK CLARK, D-Iowa, said yesterday Turner said the foreign relations panel received the same briefing that the intelligence panel had received.

Clark, who is chairman of the foreign relations panel's Africa subcommittee, said his reaction to the briefing is that the Carter administration's evidence of Cuban involvement "suggests that the president's statements may be credible, but the evidence doesn't support more than that."

Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, said he had not reached a final judgement since he had not seen the administration's supporting documentation.

Sen. Jacob Javits, R-N.Y., said he is convinced that there is "substance to the president's charges."

Sen. George McGovern, D-S.D., said his conclusion was that "while

there is enough circumstantial evidence to bring an indictment, they would never get a conviction."

THE KATANGESE rebels invaded Zaire from neighboring Angola where Cuba has a very large presence, including some 20,000 troops. After the invasion, Cuban President Fidel Castro took the highly unusual step of calling in the highest ranking U.S. diplomat in Havana and personally denying involvement.

Cuba and the United States do not fully recognize each other in diplomatic terms so have exchanged "interest sections" rather than ambassadors.

Carter's assertion of Cuban involvement has also brought him criticism from one of Africa's most respected statesmen, Julius Nyerere, president of Tanzania.

"There is no evidence of Cuban or Soviet involvement in this. . . . The Cubans have persistently and convincingly repudiated such allegations," Nyerere said this week.

As for the Senate intelligence panel, its chairman, Sen. Birch Bayh, D-Ind., has said publicly that there is "credible information from credible sources" to support Carter's charge. In a recent exchange with reporters, he declined to answer questions about the nature of the evidence.

THE FOREIGN relations panel members were unanimous yesterday in agreeing to a complete study of the administration's policy toward Africa, including the issue of Cuban involvement in the invasion.

Clark said yesterday the administration has not presented Congress with a clear picture of what its intentions are in Africa.

"The administration's Africa policy is very much in flux," he said. "I think they're very uncertain themselves."

The question, Clark said, was whether Carter would continue his earlier policy of identifying with black majority populations in nations such as South Africa or whether Africa would be seen as it has seemed more recently, a "cold war battleground" for East-West confrontation.